

Free Disaster Legal Services, Crisis Counseling Available to Georgia Storm Survivors

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ATLANTA - If you are facing legal issues or experiencing feelings of hopelessness or stress resulting from Georgia's Jan. 12 severe storms, straight-line winds and tornadoes, you can get disaster legal advice and crisis counseling.

FEMA has made the free services available to residents in the eight counties most affected by the storms: **Butts, Henry, Jasper, Meriwether, Newton, Pike, Spalding and Troup.**

Disaster Legal Services. Low-income, elderly and other vulnerable residents who were affected by the disaster and are unable to afford their own lawyer may call **866-584-8027 or 404-527-8793.** The helpline is open **9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Monday to Friday. Voicemail messages can be left 24 hours a day, every day. When leaving a message, include the county where you are located and describe your disaster-related legal problem. Callers may receive assistance from staff at Georgia Legal Aid or a volunteer attorney. Examples of available assistance include help with securing FEMA and other benefits; insurance claims; home repair contracts and contractors; consumer protection matters; replacement of wills and other important legal documents that were destroyed; and mortgage-foreclosure and landlord/tenant problems.

The service is a partnership between FEMA, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and Georgia legal groups.

Immediate Crisis Counseling. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and FEMA have activated a Disaster Distress Helpline in Georgia; telephone or text **800-985-5990.** This free crisis support service is available all day, every day, for disaster survivors experiencing emotional distress or mental health problems caused or aggravated by the storms and tornadoes or their aftermath.



The helpline staff may provide confidential counseling and other needed support services. They can also immediately connect callers to trained professionals from the nearest participating crisis-counseling center.

Spanish-speakers can press “2” for bilingual support. Callers can connect with counselors in more than 100 languages via third-party interpretation services by telling the counselor their preferred language. A videophone option for American Sign Language users is also available by calling **800-985-5990** from a videophone-enabled device or via an “ASL Now” link at [Disaster Distress Helpline | SAMHSA](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline) ([samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)).

The deadline to apply for federal disaster assistance is **Monday, March 20**. For an accessible video on how to apply for FEMA assistance, go to go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LU7wzRjByhl>.

For the latest information on Georgia’s recovery from the severe storms, straight-line winds and tornadoes, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4685](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4685). You may also follow [@GeorgiaEMAHS/Twitter](https://twitter.com/GeorgiaEMAHS), [Facebook.com/GeorgiaEMAHS](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaEMAHS), [@FEMARegion4/Twitter](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion4) and [Facebook.com/FEMA](https://www.facebook.com/FEMA).



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